



garden cuttings

a monthly newsletter for the discerning gardener

Vol. 2 : No. 1

OCTOBER 1982

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Sold by subscription \$12.00 per year

One Year Old ...

It is just twelve months since we launched 'Garden Cuttings'. We did so with enthusiasm, tempered by some apprehension; enthusiasm because we felt that there had to be a need for a new gardening newsletter, apprehension because we stood alone, with limited resources, should we be proved wrong.

That we were not wrong has been proved by the great many complimentary letters we continue to receive, by the support which, in recent months, our advertisers have lent, and by the number and calibre of the contributed articles — I should add that all these are voluntary and unpaid.

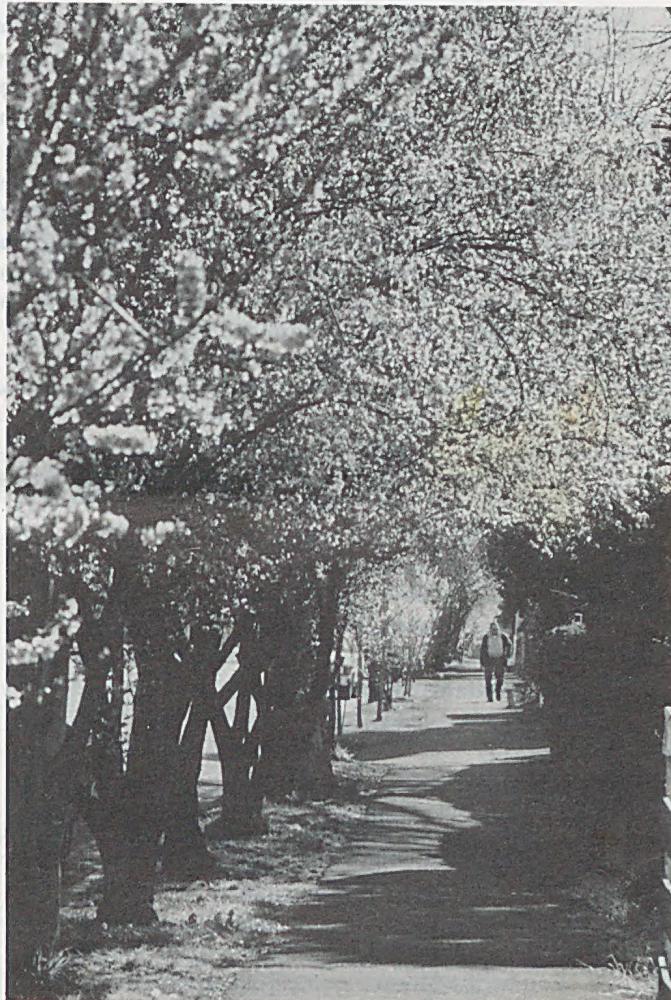
Our Garden Lovers' Tour of English Gardens, planned for next June, has also met with a most gratifying response; in fact anyone who is seriously thinking of joining us should contact our travel agents before the end of this month, as the numbers are limited.

However, we have to make 'Garden Cuttings' viable in its present form, and we have reluctantly decided that we cannot do this on the present subscription rate of \$10 per year; so the subscription has to go up - to \$12 per year starting with this issue.

We hope that what we feel is a very modest increase will be generally accepted, in which case we can start our second year encouraged, but by no means complacent. We would like to see 'Garden Cuttings' become larger, with, at the same time, more advertising support to keep the subscription rate stable; we would like more contributed articles of a high standard; we would like, in due course, to be able to include some colour photographs; and we would like - in fact we need - many more subscribers!

Suggestions on how it might be improved are always welcome, but if you enjoy reading 'Garden Cuttings' you can help us most by telling your friends about it. Or perhaps you would like to give a gift subscription (and Christmas is not far away) - there is a special coupon for this purpose on page 11.

TIM NORTH



SPRING BLOSSOM IN BOWRAL - PHOTO KERRY DUNDAS

Galore Hill Reserve

(We are indebted to Mrs Helen Gammage and Mr E.E. Heckendorff for the information on which the following article has been based)

Galore Hill, in the Riverina District of New South Wales, was originally classified as a gold reserve, following the discovery of minute quantities of gold in the area. It was later converted to a timber reserve, and subsequently became a gravel reserve, and then, in 1923, a recreation reserve.

In 1969 it became a Nature Reserve under the control of Lockhart Shire Council, and the rights to remove gravel were cancelled. Restoration of the erosion that had been caused by the removal of gravel began immediately under the supervision of the N.S.W. Soil Conservation Service.

Mr. John Bladen, a teacher at the tiny Fargunyah Public School, situated near to the reserve, began taking his twelve pupils for nature walks, collecting specimens of flowers and shrubs, and having them identified at Sydney's National Herbarium. This work provided the initial impetus for the development of the Reserve.

Mr. Frank Prichard (now retired), the Shire Engineer of Lockhart Council, worked assiduously in planting the Reserve, as well as listing the existing flora, and this work has been commemorated by a plaque at the road junction within the Reserve.

An Advisory Committee now keeps the Shire Council informed of requirements for further planting and for the development and maintenance of roads and tracks. The Lockhart Rotary Club has a continuing programme of developing and beautifying the Reserve, and has constructed barbecues and walking tracks, the latter to the caverns on the northern cliff face.

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The summit of the hill rises 1240 feet above sea level, and from the observation platform one has a 360 degree panoramic view of the surrounding agricultural land. The Reserve covers an area of approximately 939 acres.

Over 2500 Australian native trees and shrubs have been planted in the Reserve, covering more than 450 different species - there are 120 Eucalypt species, 85 Acacia, 85 Grevillea, 42 Hakea, 31 Melaleuca, as well as hundreds of others, less well known. There are native orchids, such as the Waxlip Orchid (*Glossodia major*) and the rarer Bearded Orchid (*Calochilus robertsonii*); native bulbous plants like *Arthropodium menuis* and *Dianella revoluta*, many everlasting, ferns, creepers and native grasses.

Galore Hill can be reached by means of the Lockhart-Narrandera Road (main road 370) 8½ miles north of Lockhart and from the Lockhart-Wagga road (trunk road 59) two miles east of the town.

Book Reviews

GROWING HARDY PERENNIALS, by Kenneth A. Beckett. Croom Helm, London; recommended retail price \$18.95

Kenneth Beckett is Editor for the Hardy Plant Society of England, and also Technical Editor of 'The Gardeners' Chronicle'. That this is an authoritative book goes without saying. It is also an attractively produced book, though the colour illustrations are few in number and not all of outstanding quality. There is a chapter on 'Using Hardy Perennials' - in single and double sided borders, island beds, in mixed borders, as ground covers, and so on: there is sound and detailed instruction on propagation, planting and pest and disease control. This is followed by a very comprehensive A to Z list of genera and species, and finally there are 'Lists for special purposes', e.g. shade, acid soils, drought resistant, foliage effect, etc.

The hardy perennial enthusiast will find this a useful reference book and may well make some new discoveries. The novice will probably want a book more copiously illustrated.

THE DAMP GARDEN by Beth Chatto. J.M. Dent & Son, London and Melbourne; recommended retail price \$24.95

We have already written, in 'Garden Cuttings' of the remarkable success story of Beth Chatto. During a recent visit to England I was privileged to meet this charming, energetic and immensely knowledgeable lady, and to see her very beautiful garden and her nursery of unusual plants. In this garden there is a dry bank of gravel and sand (the average rainfall is only about 20 inches per year) and there is also some very damp ground. How fortunate we are that she has chosen to follow up her first book, on the Dry Garden, with one on the Damp Garden. I need only say that this book reflects Beth's charm, her enthusiasm, and her great practical knowledge of plants which she delights in sharing with others. The book describes the making of her Water Gardens, the shade beds, the Canal Beds, the clay garden and the Reservoir Garden, the plants which thrived and those which didn't. The excellent colour photographs are of her own garden, and there is an alphabetical list of plants suitable for damp situations.

TIM NORTH

English Gardens No. 5

Pusey House, near Farringdon, Oxfordshire

Pusey House was built in 1748 to the design of John Wood, the architect of Georgian Bath. The Pusey family traced its lineage back to one of Canute's officers, William Pewse, who was awarded a grant for life and a 'Horn of Tenure' for saving the King's life; the 'Horn of Pusey' can be seen to-day in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

But it was a sad and forlorn place when the present owners, Mr and Mrs Michael Hornby, acquired it in 1935. The late Elizabeth Coxhead, one of the most sensitive writers about gardens of this century, described it as a 'Sleeping Beauty' - the house semi-derelict, the lake a sea of mud, and dark Victorian shrubberies blocking every vista.

At that time the lawn swept right up to the house in Capability Brown style. The first thing the Hornbys did was to engage Geoffrey Jellicoe, then at the threshold of his career as a landscape architect, to create a terrace in front of the house. The formality of this terrace has been tempered by careful planting, and the same careful - one might almost call it 'inspired' - planting is evident in every part of the garden, nearly all of which has been created by Mr and Mrs Hornby themselves. Particularly noticeable are the bold, imaginative, yet totally harmonious colour groupings - for Mrs Hornby is a distinguished flower painter, who has had exhibitions both in England and in America.

One enters the garden at the top end of a double border; these start with strong reds, then shade down to blues and yellows, and finish with silver and white at the far end, at which point one leaves through a beautiful wrought iron gate.

Now the lawn slopes down to the lake, and to left and right is the Long Border, actually a blend of herbaceous perennials, annuals and shrubs, and a masterpiece of plant association.

Further to the left, past the Jellicoe terrace, are four borders devoted to old shrub roses - but with a few modern additions like 'Constance Spry' and 'Aloha'. Past the rose border is another herbaceous border confined to tones of yellow and orange.

Then to the Chinoiserie bridge over the lake, which is probably as old as the house itself, and in a remarkable state of preservation. On the far side of the lake is a series of water gardens, featuring Primulas, clumps of *Lysimachia punctata* and groups of Hostas. From there one wanders through the shrub borders; here is a vast *Rhus cotinoides*, a giant *Hydrangea villosa*, *Cytisus battandieri*, *Cornus nuttallii*, *Pyrus salicifolia*, large Liquidambars, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Acer griseum* and the yellow-green flowered cherry *Prunus 'Yukon'*. In spite of the alkaline soil - and the Hornbys have been careful to eschew known lime-intolerant plants - it is interesting to see a fine *Magnolia sinensis* and *Magnolia x loebneri*.

Returning over the lake one finds a walled garden, known as Lady Emily's garden after Lady Emily Herbert, who married Phillip Bouverie Pusey in 1822; here there are more old roses, *Artemisia*, *Verbascum broussa*, white *Clematis* and *Hydrangea sargentiana*.

In the 1960s the Hornbys added a swimming pool, with a pavillion designed by Godfrey Allen, who modelled its Gothic arches on the nearby stable clock. Tubs of blue *Agapanthus* stand at each corner of the pool.



(PUSEY HOUSE IS ANOTHER OF THE GARDENS TO BE VISITED DURING OUR GARDEN LOVERS' TOUR OF ENGLISH GARDENS NEXT YEAR. FOR FULL DETAILS OF THIS TOUR SEE OUR AUGUST ISSUE).

Delphiniums Red and Geraniums Blue!

by Trevor Nottle

The Dormouse and the Doctor in A.A. Milne's poem 'The Dormouse and the Doctor', although undoubtedly each a gardening fanatic and a regular visitor to Kew, would be surprised by today's versions of their favourite flowers delphiniums and geraniums. Some years back we all marvelled at the news from Holland that horticulturists had developed red, orange and yellow shades in delphiniums from breeding programmes involving three species - *D. nudicaule* (orange red), *D. cardinale* (red) and *D. zalil* (yellow). But blue geraniums, now that really was unheard of! And who'd want them anyway?

The raucous red delphiniums seem to have passed from the earth without ever reaching our shores but the blue geranium still persists and causes a good deal of scoffing when introduced to garden visitors. Bending down to take a closer, sceptical look at its finely divided leaves and stems of nodding blue flowers the disbelievers look in vain for hairy, round leaves, stubby stems and all the familiar scents of *Pelargonium x domesticum*. Of course, what they are looking at is a real Geranium. A Geranium with a capital G, not a geranium with a capital P (for *Pelargonium*).

Well, what are these blue Geraniums? They are sometimes known as Cranesbills, because of the long pointed shape of their unripe seed pods, and one species is recommended by herbalists as an astringent (*G. robertianum*, Herb Robert). They are mainly low annuals and perennials, some of which are entirely garden-worthy, others less so and some downright thugs.

Among the most garden-worthy are several with very large, much divided palmate leaves. The largest is *G. maderense*, from the Canary Islands. Mine reach about 1m high and more across by their second year from seed, and flower in November. The flower stem may reach 1.5m in good conditions and is covered with a cloud of rich pink butterfly flowers; each individual 'butterfly' is not unlike a small Hollyhock. Amazing and delightful. In cold areas it is a reliable biennial and elsewhere it will carry on by a succession of rooting side branches. A modest increase by self-sown seedlings will also help you plant more of this beauty. A

near relative is *Geranium anemonefolium* which has leaves similar to the first but the divisions are rounded at the ends rather than pointed, as in *G. maderense*. Some seed strains of this plant develop brilliant purple-pink hairs on the leaf and flower stems. It is smaller in stature, reaching 1m at flowering time. The rosy purple flowers appear from early Summer until Autumn and are displayed on branching stems. (Latest information declares this re-christened *G. palmatum*!) Herb Robert comes in here too, but despite its tendency to develop bright red leaves in Autumn it is too much like the farmyard cat to be welcome - its offspring pop up everywhere!

Getting back to the blue Geraniums we come to the real attractions of the group. First and best known, by whichever name, is *G. himalayense* (syn. *G. meeboldii*) which is more commonly met as *G. grandiflorum*. Forming a low mound of much divided foliage which is topped by many branched stems bearing 5cm sky blue flowers tinged with purple and veined red, this plant is reliably hardy in all but the hottest and driest places. In most average gardens it will self-sow pleasingly. It can be grown from root cuttings. With round leaves and deeper blue flowers is *G. ibericum* (var. *platypetalum*); its flowers sit better on the plant, facing upwards and showing themselves well against the leafy body of the plant. According to several authorities it really should be called *G. x magnificum*, but it has been known here for many years as *G. ibericum* and I will leave it so for easy reference to plant catalogues. The most often admired, and most elusive blue Geranium is *G. wallichianum* 'Buxton's Blue'. To grow it well it must have its roots in a cool damp spot, under stones will do, and it will take a while to settle in before giving a good account of itself. Its leaves are circular in outline but deeply cut. The flower heads appear in late Summer just in time to make an engaging Autumn show. Each flower is held facing up on a semi-trailing stem. The colour is a bright, light blue with a pronounced white eye and a few deeper veins. The stamens are dark and seem to make the flower doubly attractive. Considerably darker is *G. phaeum* - the Mourning Widow, which flowers in November and December. In this plant the leaves are slightly hairy and bright green, resembling in shape those of Bachelor's Buttons (*Ranunculus acris Flore Pleno*). The tall flowering stems rise well above the crown of foliage. The flowers are a curious and lovely shade of deep purple subdued with a tone or two of grey. Each petal is crinkled like a poppy and the whole flower hangs demurely down on a pendant petiole.

All of this group of blue Geraniums have roots which are more or less like collections of long, tough thongs; some like *G. wallichianum* have some tuberous roots as well. All are dormant in Winter and can be divided at this time using a sharp knife to separate the individual crowns. They do best in light shade such as may be found under tall shrubs, old-fashioned roses or rose species.

Five other Cranesbill deserve mention also. They are *G. tuberosum*, *G. asphodeloides*, *G. x Russell Prichard*, *G. x Claridge Druce* and *G. traversii* cv. 'Elegans'. *G. tuberosum* grows from tuberous roots and makes a good ground cover with a permanent cover of light green leaves, each with its set of deep brown spots, and a Summer into Autumn show of palest lilac blooms heavily veined purple. It seems sun-hardy provided the soil stays damp. *G. asphodeloides* doesn't put out its heads of lavender pink flowers until Autumn but it does make a solid cover of leaves all year and its very tough, far reaching roots make it a good 'doer' for Australian gardens. The flowers are lightly veined a deeper shade of lavender but this is hardly noticeable from a

standing position. 'Russell Prichard' has been available here for many years and yet seems scarcely met with in gardens. I can't imagine why as its hairy, silvery leaves set off to perfection its deep rose flowers. Even more silver, in fact about as silver as the real thing, is *G. traversii* cv. 'Elegans'. This beauty hails from New Zealand and is not yet widely known here. In late Autumn long trailing stems show off silvery pink flowers. A real gem! 'Claridge Druce' has been popular since 1900 for its lilac-pink flowers on dense, hairy leaved clumps.

All the species and cultivars mentioned will come true from seed so it's well worth your trouble to take up seed when it appears on RHS or AGS seed lists. The seed should be sown in the Autumn and will germinate the following Spring. The plants are not fussy about soil as long as it is well drained and not in heavy shade. Seedlings should be transplanted the Autumn following into their permanent homes and need only an annual dose of general fertiliser to keep them thriving. Chance seedlings will appear but not sufficient to meet the demand from gardening friends. If you wish to save your own seed you must watch to collect the seed just before it ripens as when it is fully ripe the slightest touch will trigger the release mechanism of the seed pod and seeds will fly everywhere.

A useful reference book is G.S. Thomas,
PERENNIAL GARDEN PLANTS - The Modern Florilegium
pub. Dent, London, 1976 - pp. 153-159

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Floriades '82

The Floriades is held in Holland only once in ten years, the next therefore will be in 1992.

Floriades '82 can best be described as an outstanding horticultural achievement by a nation of outstanding horticulturists. Perhaps no other nation could have staged such a vast and far-ranging exhibition, and at the same time displayed throughout such a high degree of cultural skill. This achievement is all the more remarkable when one realises that, five years ago, the 55-hectare site was a marshy wasteland bordering the Gaasper Lake, on the outskirts of Amsterdam.

This month it closes, having been open continuously since April, thus spanning three flowering seasons - spring, summer and autumn. By August, of course, the spring flowering bulbs had given way to massed displays of bedding begonias, lobelia, marigolds, salvia and so on - with a strong emphasis, by way of contrast, on silver-foliaged plants like *Senecio maritima*. The roses were still blooming magnificently in the 'Rosary', with some ninety odd modern hybrids and a large bed devoted to old-fashioned types; of interest here, too, were the miniature roses, like 'Snow Carpet' and 'Pink Spray' used very effectively as ground covers.

Then to the Conifer Garden, the Fern Garden, the water lilies, the Iris Bank, the Astilbe Border, the 'Dahliarama', and the fruit and vegetable gardens. From there to the glasshouses filled with temperate half-hardy plants, and the huge range of glasshouses showing Dutch commercial flower production - fat spikes of daffodils and Dutch iris fully 3cm out of the ground (and this in August!), chrysanthemums in ordered beds and so uniform in height and flower size that they looked almost unnatural; huge clumps of gerbera with flowers 9cm in diameter - but was it imagination, or was everything so much larger than one was accustomed to?

But it was not just excellence in cultivation that impressed. The Model Gardens, for example, showed many original ways of utilizing small spaces; the cemetery plantings - which took the form of an international competition - showed that there is scope for creativity even in this rather sombre field. Shown for the first time in Western Europe were the fascinating examples of Rock Penjing, a Chinese form of miniature landscaping. And in the huge 'Exposarium' building were some of the most brilliant floral arrangements I have seen anywhere.

A truly remarkable exhibition, and an object lesson to us all. The standard shown at Floriades would be hard to equal; I would think unbeatable.

TIM NORTH

**Remember to book YOUR
place in our Garden Lovers'
Tour of English Gardens
with the Travel Agent
BEFORE
the end of this month!**



FLORIADES '82 - AN OUTSTANDING HORTICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT



Growth retardants for the production of tulips and lilies

Tulips and lilies grown as pot plants have several advantages over cut flowers; in particular the flowers last longer and the bulbs can be later used in the garden for a second and following years.

However, many of the popular varieties grow too tall to make suitable pot plants. Dwarf varieties are available but generally the bulbs are expensive. Research has been carried out at the Glasshouse Crops Research Institute in England on the use of growth retardants for tulips and lilies, this being already standard practice with crops like pot chrysanthemums and poinsettias.

Using Tulip varieties Lucky Strike, Paul Richter and Apeldoorn, and Enchantment lilies, good results have been obtained with a range of growth retardant substances. These include Cycocel, which is used on poinsettias and chrysanthemums, Ancymidol, which is also being used in the United States on a wide range of ornamentals, and three comparatively new substances, PP333, UBI-P293 and mepiquat chloride.

Gardening with Western Australian Wildflowers

by B. Goodchild, Western Australia.

Part 2 - Now to the problems!

Western Australia is a very large state and, as it is impossible to deal with all of it in a short article we will consider mainly the south-west, where most of the domestic horticulture takes place. The important thing to remember is that it has winter rainfall and is, except towards the south coast, very hot and dry for most of the summer. Plants have evolved to combat this and frequently have become so specialised for their habitat that they will grow only on one side of a valley, only where certain minerals are present (or absent) or only appear after a fire, as well as the normal adaptations for soil pH, heath, swamp, seashore, etc. The most extreme however beautiful - and many *Stylidiums* (Trigger Plants) and orchids fall into this category - one has to love and leave, unfortunately.

To conserve water some plants have shiny or waxy leaves, others are downy or have small terete (curved under) leaves, or are fleshy and succulent, all of which do not like humid conditions. Many native plants only grow in certain relationships with large trees or shrubs, so that they are shaded for a certain part of the day, although they are still lovers of sunshine and like plenty of air around them. Others, although they appear to like a dry situation, grow where the water table is fairly high so they can get their roots to it easily - this applies to some of the Kangaroo Paws, *Anigozanthos manglesii* and *A. viridis* in particular, both of which need a fair amount of water but hate it from overhead. Move all these into a garden bed and water and fertilise with the lawn and only sorrow can result. By far the best plan is to grow wildflowers well away from lawns with their necessary sprinklers. They all, however, need a fair amount of watering until they are established and this is best done by a trickle system taking the water under the plants, with an occasional good soaking as well.

Some natives are easy-going, but too many people have continued unaccountable failures, apart from the usual problem of acid or alkaline soils. The rocks forming most of the hills inland are generally acid with many trace elements available; those underlying the coastal plain are alkaline (limestone) and, where this surfaces, so is the soil. The latter, being sand, holds few mineral salts. A few species from the acid soils seem perfectly happy in the sandplain conditions of the metropolitan area and coastal plain generally, but most are very patchy; others refuse altogether or come safely through the summer only to fail when the rains start. Why?

Well, quite a few of them, such as Pimelias and many Acacias, tend to be short-lived anyway, relying on copious seed for regeneration - be ready for them with spare plants - but I think a lot of our troubles are associated with water. Most people in the metropolitan area used to water from the tap, and scheme water comes mainly from dams in the hills. Bores and wells became popular and their water comes from under the sand. Where the land is low-lying and/or the water table is high, sitting over clay, there is less problem unless the water is too polluted with artificial fertilizers - as there is a high iron content (walls and paths get badly stained). In any case plants can often reach the water for themselves. In other areas the water table is 60 to 100 feet down or more, and is sitting in the limestone. The water drawn up is therefore alkaline, which causes any iron and many trace

elements to precipitate out, so plants that need these starve to death, usually shown by yellowing or crisping of the leaf edges.

We put a bore down - 100 feet with the water at about 60 feet. There are limestone pinnacles and old cave systems in the sand under us. The water had 853 ppm of salts, mainly calcium and magnesium sulphate. Almost immediately the lawn went a rich dark green, the *Chamaelaucium* (Geraldton Wax), *Acacias* and *Ricinocarpus* did too (the latter, and *Eucalyptus erythrocarpus* grew too fast and snapped off). Shortly, all the *Verticordias* died, the *Calythrix* looked sick; later the *Leptospermum* hybrid died and so did its replacement. The *Calythrix* and a few other things coped when iron and trace elements were applied. *Banksias*, *Casuarina*, *Agonis* and *Callistemon* (from Albany) are still very happy, as are *Scaevolas* - they are all coastal. On the other hand, *Banksias* are reputed to be impossible inland, though I have found them respond to the addition of lime.

Where the water table is far from the surface there is no way the average plant can get its roots down far enough in the first season - except for some *Eucalypts* and other large trees and shrubs with fast growing taproots - which is where the necessity of growing in the lee of something bigger comes in.

Other unexpected problems can be associated with water. Clumped plants, such as *Anigozanthos* and *Conostylis*, frequently rot at the crown with overhead watering in summer, yet are unaffected by equally overhead rain in winter! This could be because they are actively growing in the winter, the young leaves are glossier and the rhizomes plumped out and so are able to repel moisture and provide less comfort for fungi. Conversely many natives, such as the less frequently grown and most beautiful *Chorizemas*, flower and increase in size happily when watered all the summer, yet die when the winter rains set in. The most probable reason for this is that the out-of-season watering, combined with the warmth, causes too much growth so that, by the time the normal growth season comes, the plant and the available nutrients are both exhausted.

I have mentioned that plants adapted for harsh dry conditions cannot stand humidity, which also means that they cannot stand being smothered. The result of garden watering is lush growth of the larger leaved plants and the adjacent lawn or ground cover. If these sprawl over the others, particularly small-leaved healthy types, the latter usually die. This so often happens in summer as the heat discourages continuous care of the garden. Again, so many people water a little every day. This brings the roots near the surface to reach that little water. A soaking less frequently will get the roots down where they are less likely to dry out if they are neglected due to holidays or illness. This applies to all plants of course, but little and often is a very widespread fault.

In the hills there are relatively few snails; on the coastal plains they are legion, probably because they need the calcium for their shells and because it is cooler. Watering gives them plenty of succulent food so they breed to plague proportions (I hand-picked over 90,000 in one year in our one-third of an acre garden) and they will demolish anything juicy, especially monocotyledons. I cannot keep *Thysanotis multiflora* or *Anigozanthos viridis* - the snails always get them in the early autumn. On a slightly different tack, neighbours' dogs and, occasionally cats, can be a trial - apart from digging and treading, their urine means sudden death to most small native plants such as prostrate *Scaevolas*, *Dampieras* and *Leschenaultias*, also small healthy shrubs.

There are other problems, involving planting and propagation. Generally, the best and most trouble-free plants will be those

grown from seed, preferably by the gardener so that they can be grown in situ. A high proportion of woody species from arid conditions have taproots which grow very fast - I have a *Banksia grandis* that had a root two feet long when its first true leaf was just appearing - so it is essential that such should be in their permanent positions when very young, and very early in the wet season if they have any distance to go for water. If they are grown in small pots the taproots cannot develop and are malformed; such seedlings, together with cuttings, rarely gain the depth needed before the dry weather. Small plants in large pots, then, when purchasing. The trouble with cuttings is that they rarely get a deep root system, but they do come true to type. Seedlings from wild seed can vary widely and few species from the West are enough generations from the wild to have had sufficient culling, but the plants will do with less attention. In either case, get the seeds or cuttings from a plant already growing in a garden, if possible. That plant survived being domesticated, its offspring stand a better chance of doing likewise.

From the foregoing, you will see that you cannot win all the time, but it is very well worth trying.

The XXIst International Horticultural Congress

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, the most northerly city of the German Federal Republic, played host from the 29th August to the 5th September to nearly two thousand horticultural scientists, teachers and economists, orchardists, nurserymen - and this one horticultural scribe. Seventy seven nations were represented - Australia by the surprisingly large number of ninety - and in the five working days of the Congress over seven hundred papers were presented and nearly four hundred poster exhibits displayed. The Abstracts of the Congress alone fill two large volumes, totalling some 1300 pages.

Such a vast amount of horticultural knowledge naturally takes quite a lot of digesting. Some of it is of such a specialized nature that it would interest few, if any, readers of 'Garden Cuttings'. The more important and relevant information I will endeavour to pick out and present in a reasonably lucid form over the next few months.

The fact that this amount of horticultural research is going on around the world reinforces my belief that enthusiastic and knowledgeable amateur gardeners, the sort of people who, I hope, read 'Garden Cuttings', only ever learn about a small fraction of it. And yet much of it is very relevant to what we do in our own gardens, to the plants we plant and the way in which we care for them. The improvement of cultivated plants by selective breeding, the use of growth-regulating substances for various purposes, integrated pest-management involving biological methods, new potting substrates, air and soil pollution, energy saving and the utilization of waste energy - these are just some of the subjects covered.

This Congress, however, was particularly interesting because of the signs that were given that the scientists are, at last, beginning to break out of their boxes, descend from their ivory

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towers, and take notice of the needs of Society, of the consuming public and the horticultural industry; they are beginning, too, to look at their own work in relation to non-horticultural science developments.

For the first time at an International Congress urban horticulture - defined as the functional use of plants to enhance and maintain the urban environment - and 'leisure' gardening (I prefer the more familiar term 'home' gardening) were subjects for serious discussion - it was a little disappointing, however, that the latter was discussed only from the German standpoint, which is not altogether relevant to Australian conditions. The International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS), which sponsors the International Congress, has now officially recognized urban horticulture as a separate scientific discipline, and has established a Commission, under the chairmanship of Dr David Robinson, of Eire, to study it. Dr Henry B. Tukey, jnr, Director of the Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington in Seattle, and the incoming President of ISHS, made the point that much horticultural research directed at the production of plants is not applicable, and may even be detrimental to, the utilization of plants in towns and cities; research in this field, therefore, needs a new direction.

Horticulture as a therapy for the disabled, too, has become an important subject. In a most impressive 'off-the-cuff' talk on horticulture for the mentally disabled Mr D.L. Carter, from the Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults in England, described this as a vast and almost totally unexplored field that held out tremendous promise.

There was emphasis, too, on the need for improved education in horticulture, not only for those wishing to enter the industry on a professional basis, but also for home gardeners, who, in particular, should learn more about the importance of hygiene as a means of cutting down on the use of chemical pesticides, and in pest observation so as to recognize the crucial stage at which to apply control measures. There is also a need to remember and revive the old techniques of collecting and trapping insects and slugs.

TIM NORTH



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Two nurseries in South Australia

by Trevor Nottle

1. The Green Witch Nursery

In these days of supermarket-style plant outlets, plant boutiques, chain store specials and handyman store plant clearances, it is hard indeed to find a real plant nursery - where baby plants are propagated and nurtured with loving care and knowing skill. One such place is The Green Witch, Avenue Road, Stirling, South Australia. The owner and chief worker is Charlie Szabo, trained in Hungary before WW II. Charlie, who is interested mainly in alpines, perennials and fine climbers, is ably assisted by Jaqui (herbs, native alpines and bulbs), Carol (general hauling, weeding and watering) and Bingo the Siamese cat who specialises in super friendly public relations. Jaqui is also chief Turkish coffee maker - a brew dispensed to regulars at 4 p.m. daily!

This tiny nursery, wedged on its hillside site among grand old homes, is just the place to spend browsing for an hour or two. You will find all sorts of things tucked away in the shade houses and on the terraced sales areas. If you are looking for something special it pays to ask for it. Charlie or Jaqui may well dive into some little nook and fish out just the thing you've always wanted for your border, rockery or shrubbery.

Among Charlie's treasures are *Euphorbia myrsinites*, double *Alyssum saxatile*, and also *A. saxatile citrinum*, *Caltha palustris*, a big selection of *Dianthus* and *Clematis*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Epimediums*, *Lewisias*, *Primulas* in variety, and many unusual shrubs - all propagated by Charlie. A big bonus is that he doesn't mind letting you watch while he goes about the mysteries of taking *Clematis* cuttings, or grafting Japanese maples. Once you are established as a 'real' gardener, Charlie is happy to propagate the treasures you bring to him from friends' gardens. By this friendly gesture Charlie increases the range of plants he has for sale and customers are able to get plants they especially want. The variegated Hedgehog Holly is just one rarity obtained in this way.

Both Charlie and Jaqui keep in touch with all the specialist growers in the Blue Mountains, the Dandenongs and Tasmania, and by swapping are able to obtain small stocks of rarer plants and new imports long before they are released.

The Green Witch is one of those rare special nurseries where modern merchandising, rapid turnover and volume sales haven't displaced the older ideals of customer service and satisfaction. Such places are few and far between and should be sought out by discerning gardeners both for the wide range of interesting (and rare) plants they offer and for the unique camaraderie of their proprietors and staff.

2. Norton Summit Plant Nursery

It is not hard for plant-minded people to imagine the excitement that would be felt if you just happened to be in the market for a nursery, and found one that was in a picturesque spot and stocked with all manner of unusual plants.

Such was the luck of Jenny Chapman of Norton Summit some years ago. Since purchasing the rather run-down site Jenny has built up a discerning collection of plants. Aided by Fay ('Staff') Pedler and husband Gary (balloonist and 'hired help') and numerous hard-working friends, the nursery buildings and layout have been revamped and stocks considerably enlarged and upgraded. The massive potting shed is the centre of activities where regular callers lend a hand with the work in hand, while talking plants with Jenny and Fay. A wander up and down the narrow pathways will lead to shadehouses, ferneries, brush-houses and standing-out areas which are packed with orderly displays of all sorts of 'goodies'. Among the less common plants they had available last winter were *Rhododendron x imbracatum* (a very old hybrid found in and re-introduced from Hill End), *Lonicera hildebrandiana*, *Fuchsia 'Swanley Gem'* (1901), *Leucothe catesbaei* and *Daphne x burkwoodii*. There were equally unusual Proteas, Conifers and shadehouse plants.

As they are both keen plant collectors, Jenny and Fay are continually searching for new, unusual and 'wished-for' plants. Fairly frequent interstate trips are made, long 'wish-lists' trailing behind them from nursery to nursery - and not just the big ones!

Locally, their interest in plants and connections with like-minded people mean that they frequently hear of gardens about to be demolished or sub-divided and are able to rescue specially unusual or rare plants. Last year they 'salvaged' a massive tree peony, several old cycads and numerous 'old-style' shrubs, climbers and perennials.

If you enjoy a good browse through a nursery, and a good chat with fellow gardeners then the Norton Summit Plant Nursery is a good place to visit.

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Looking back

by Penelope Ralph

The following article on 'Digging' appears in an early Coles Australian Gardening Book dated 1897 -

"There is no more healthy exercise than digging, there is no constitutional, no aid to digestion, no cure for the blues, no recipe for a good night's sleep, no quietus for ruffled nerves or an excited brain, to match half-an-hour of honest digging once or twice a day. It is an exercise which proves highly beneficial to persons engaged in literary pursuits. It may be safely recommended to anyone unaccustomed to manual labour, not only to learn to dig, but to dig in a proper manner, by changing hands at each turning, and working with his face to the newly turned ground. When a man commences to dig he naturally takes hold of the spade handle with his right hand, and proceeds, or ought to, to the right, then when he has got to the end of a furrow, hand should be changed, the left hand laying hold of the handle, and proceed in the opposite direction, thus always facing his work. There are two kinds of digging - rough and fine; in the former each spit is laid down and left to remain in the lump, a method practised in cold climates where crops cannot be put in the ground during winter, with the object of getting the clods mellowed by frost, which however could rarely be effected in this country: therefore fine digging is generally practised. When manure is required it is, of course, laid down and spread before the digging is commenced. The digging fork may be recommended in place of the spade, is being superior in some respects, penetrating the soil in the furrow after the first spit is turned over".

The next article comes from the Australian Scientific Magazine, Vol 1, 1885, under the heading 'Flower Gardening of To-day' -

"The heliotrope has evidently been elected the Queen of Flowers in the world of fashion for the present season. We hear its sweet odour is to reign supremely in Ladies' sachets, and it may be presumed in the toilet box of the 'masher'. Now it is unfortunate that even the olfactory nerves, which are by no means the least sensitive and discriminating of human organs should thus be lead into almost slavish compliance with Fashion's whims. Heliotrope - nothing but heliotrope - when the variety of perfumes is so great! Sweet though it be, even the dullest nose must feel the inconsistency of recognizing 'Fashion' in a scent. One of the keenest pleasures to the sense of smell is that derived from a good, old-fashioned flower garden, and what is the reason for its charm? It is that many varied odours are so blended that it would be impossible to award the palm to any one flower, either the honeysuckle, jasmine, carnation, lily, or the rose. We can imagine the feelings of old James Hervey - who wrote 'Reflections on a Flower Garden' and delighted in the balmy fragrance that 'not only regales the sense but cheers the very soul' - were he here now to know that a particular scent should be the 'Fashion'. But the heliotrope, whose perfume, by the way, we do not wish in the least to deprecate, is also to set a scale of colour. Ball dresses, tea gowns, and dinner dresses, in a great variety of materials, have taken its hue, and very delicate it is combined with such contrasts as gold embroidery, gold ornaments, white satin, or leaves of rich-toned brown.

The Editors Chair

For travellers abroad

The Dumbarton Oaks Program for Studies in History of Landscape Architecture will hold a symposium on medieval gardens in Washington D.C. from 20th to 23rd May 1983.

There will be a major exhibition of the life and work of Humphrey Repton in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, from 1st December 1982 to 20th February 1983. It will bring together Repton's Red Books, landscape and architectural designs, water colours and published works. There will also be a substantial photographic record of existing sites. Several of Repton's garden ornaments are to be reconstructed to form a setting for this exhibition.

The International Horticultural Exhibition will be held in Munich from April to October 1983.

Plants wanted

Mr. W.R. Greenwood, 146 Pottery Road, Lenah Valley, Tasmania 7008, is seeking cuttings or plants of purple or pink flowered Datura, also seed of the yellow-podded dwarf French bean 'Nack's Golden Perle'.

Mrs P.L. Freeman, 6 Watson Street, Glen Iris, Victoria, 3146, is seeking bulbs of Leucocoryne, *Lycoris radiata* and *Lycoris sprengeri*, also plants (not seed) of *Tacitus bellis*.

Some readers have kindly sent information on plants which have previously been listed in this column. *Clivia miniata*, cream flowers with a yellow throat, is apparently available from 'Flowerdale', 46 Flowerdale Road, Glen Iris, Victoria, 3146 for \$25 each, plus \$3.50 p & p. *Romulea alba* is apparently available from Golden Ray Gardens, Kallista, Victoria, 3791, while *Romulea sabulosa* is available from K. Bilston, 20th Century Gladiolus Gardens, 83 Yarrowee Street, Sebastopol, Victoria, 3356. We emphasise that this information has been supplied by readers, and 'Garden Cuttings' can give no guarantee of its accuracy at the time of going to press.

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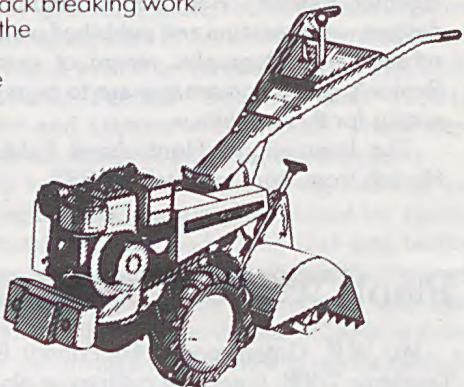


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Two new vegetable seeds

In the new Yates packet seed range is a new hybrid melon called Ogen and a new hybrid sweetcorn, Supergold.

Ogen has green delicately perfumed flesh with a very sweet flavour. The skin is smooth with an attractive netted pattern. It should be sown from spring to early summer in temperate climates or through to autumn in sub-tropical areas. The recommended procedure is to sow four or five seeds direct on a well prepared bed, in small hills about one metre apart; seedlings are later reduced to the two strongest on each hill. The fruit is ready to pick when the stem pulls easily from the fruit.

Sweetcorn Supergold has deep yellow cobs with an extra sweet flavour that is retained over a long period. It produces at least two cobs per plant. It should be grown in blocks of short rows rather than in one long row, so as to facilitate pollination. The plants will grow to a height of about two metres. Seed should be sown from spring to summer, or into autumn in sub-tropical areas, in a well-drained sunny position. The cobs should be picked when the silks turn brown and the cobs are standing out from the stems at an angle of about thirty degrees.



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Breeding by the Moon

Experiments at Universities in several countries show that there is a definite correlation between germination and growth and the waxing and waning of the Moon.

Hybridizers are also finding that the Moon influences their work. In the May 1982 American Orchid Society Bulletin, Shell Kanzar, of Seagull's Landing Orchids in New York State, states that he and several other successful orchid hybridizers breed by the Hawaiian Moon Calendar on only seven days in each month - on the new Moon, on the full Moon, one day before the last quarter Moon, and from two days before to one day after the first quarter Moon. He says that plants bred on these days hold more pods for the full term than ever before. Mr Kanzar specializes in miniature Cattleyas, and has bred many hybrids which do well at lower light intensities and under a wider temperature range than most.

News for Art Lovers

Beth Mayne's Studio Shop, at the corner of Palmer and Burton Street, Darlinghurst, Sydney, is participating in a State-wide festival of 'Women in the Arts' during the whole month of October.

Two rooms will be set aside, one for the work of contemporary women artists, the other for earlier artists such as Grace Cossington - Smith, Margaret Preston and Thea Proctor.

The Studio Shop is open from Tuesday to Saturday each week, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Durian properly described

by John Marshall

(reproduced by permission of the Rare Fruit Council of Australia)

This noble fruit is held in such high esteem in South East Asia that is surely deserves a better description than 'something that fell off the back of a garbage truck'.

A fully ripe undamaged Durian smells strongly fruity and sweet. In fact it smells delicious. The unique odour comes from thioether and ester compounds in the aril, but as yet these compounds are not well defined. The Durian taste could also be described as strongly fruity and sweet with a heavy carbohydrate factor in it. The flesh contains only 2.5% protein but is very rich in carbohydrates, about 150 calories per 100 grams.

The problem of smell only arises when the fruit splits on the lower end and the flesh oxides and ferments, when it becomes smelly like any other rotten fruit. Most fruit stalls in South East Asia have a nearby garbage bin full of rotting Durian skins and this pollutes the whole area and leads to those unsavoury descriptions.

The beginner should follow a few rules. Firstly sniff the fruit for a few days, to build up a desire for it. Then eat only one or two spoonfuls at the first attempt, and you will soon be an ardent Durian lover.

The hot flushes one may experience soon after eating a Durian are simply a part of the aphrodisiac effect.

Quote of the month

Man comes to build stately sooner than to garden finely, as if the latter were the great perfection.

Francis Bacon: On Gardens (1625)

garden cuttings

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ISSN 0729-8692

Address all correspondence, including advertising enquiries, to:

GARDEN CUTTINGS,
P.O. Box 279,
Edgecliff, N.S.W. 2027.
Phone: (02) 326 1519

Registered by Australia Post: Publication No. NBQ 4824.

Typesetting and printing by
Shepson Printing (Letterpress & Offset) Pty. Ltd.